# Alternatives FAQs

MOVING TRANSPORTATION FORWARD

1.888.898.2111 | www.udot.utah.gov/i15utahcounty

**October 2005**

1. **WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)?**
   An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required when federal funds are being expended on a project and is the official document disclosing potential impacts of the proposed project on the natural and built environments. The study must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that requires extensive evaluation of environmental effects and public input related to federally funded transportation projects.

2. **WHY AN EIS?**
   To address projected local and regional population growth and transportation demand in Utah County, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and its partners are evaluating the need for making transportation improvements to the I-15 Corridor in Utah and Salt Lake counties as part of an EIS. This EIS is the decision document that will be used to determine what improvements will be made in the I-15 Corridor. In the EIS, UDOT will evaluate several transportation alternatives and assess environmental issues for each. An EIS is a decision-making document, and preparing it is the last step in the study process before final design and construction can begin.

3. **WHY ANOTHER STUDY? YOU CAN SEE WE NEED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS!**
   An EIS must be prepared in order to qualify for federal funding, consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EIS is the official decision-making document disclosing potential impacts of proposed transportation improvements in a study area.

4. **WHO DECIDES WHAT IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE BUILT?**
   The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in cooperation with the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), Utah Transit Authority (UTA), Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) and the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC), are preparing this EIS. These agencies used input from local citizens to help determine the transportation alternatives that are being considered. Based on public input, impacts to the natural and built environment, and cost effectiveness the partnering organizations will determine the best transportation solution.

5. **WHAT MEASURES ARE USED TO EVALUATE THE ALTERNATIVES?**
   A number of measures are used to evaluate the alternatives and to determine how well the proposed improvements work: level of social, economic and environmental impacts; capital and operating costs; financial feasibility; local issues; and public acceptance. Input of local residents and those directly affected by the project is critical to identify the best possible transportation solution.

6. **HOW DID YOU GET TO FIVE ALTERNATIVES?**
   The project team used more than 300 ideas based on public input, past transportation studies, and other sources to develop 21 alternatives for the study area. The team then evaluated the 21 alternatives using a number of criteria, including transportation performance and cost effectiveness. This process, called "screening," narrowed the list of alternatives for detailed study to five. More information about the "screening" process is available on the project Web site at www.udot.utah.gov/i15utahcounty.

**(more)**

7. **WHY IS SALT LAKE COUNTY PART OF THE STUDY?**
   The I-15 Corridor EIS includes both Utah County and Salt Lake County in order to address projected local and regional population growth, travel demand, and transportation system interconnectivity. Specifically, transit alternatives are being studied for the area between Provo and downtown Salt Lake City, while roadway options are being analyzed between Santaquin in Utah County and 10600 South in Salt Lake County.

8. **ISN'T THE SOLUTION OBVIOUS—BUILD MORE LANES ON I-15?**
   A variety of transportation solutions are being analyzed as part of the I-15 Corridor EIS. Many members of the general public have identified adding lanes as the solution to relieving congestion on I-15, and this is being considered as one solution. However, one priority of the I-15 Corridor EIS is to examine other congestion-relieving options and to identify the optimal transportation solutions. Such options may include High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)—or Carpool—Lanes and increased transit service such as Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

9. **WHY DON'T YOU BUILD A ROAD ON THE WEST SIDE OF UTAH LAKE?**
   Building a road on the west side of Utah Lake was considered during the alternatives screening process for this study. Analyses show that this road would not alleviate the traffic on I-15 since most of the trips made in Utah County have destinations along the Corridor. Transportation planners recognize that there may be a need for a road west of Utah Lake at some point in the future. However, this idea has been eliminated as part of this study.

10. **WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO BUILD IMPROVEMENTS?**
    The EIS process is only one of the many steps required before improvements can be made to I-15 in Utah and Salt Lake counties. Once the EIS process is completed, which usually takes approximately three years, then the money to fund the improvements must be secured. Once funding has been secured, construction will begin. Since this is a very long corridor (approximately 65 miles), construction will most likely take a number of years, depending on the solution selected.

11. **WHERE WILL THE FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT COME FROM?**
    Roadway and transit funding has not yet been secured for this project.

12. **HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED IN THE STUDY PROCESS?**
    Local businesses and residents, commuters and other stakeholder groups are invited to provide input and suggestions by using any of the following methods:

    - E-mail: i15utahcounty@utah.gov
    - Toll-free comment line: 1-888-i15-UTCO (1-888-415-8826)
    - Project Web site: www.udot.utah.gov/i15utahcounty
    - Mail: I-15 Corridor EIS
      c/o Parsons Brinckerhoff
      488 E. Winchester Street, Suite 400
      Murray, Utah 84107

**(end)**